

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /082 W

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P R 231119Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9710

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USIA WASHDC

DIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: SEPT. 22-23 SYRIAN MEDIA FOCUS ON SARKIS INAUGURATION

1. SYRIAN MEDIA HAVE CONCENTRATED ON PREPARATIONS FOR SARKIS' INAUGURATION IN CHTAURA. PRESS HEADLINED: "NEW STAGE IN LEBANON'S HISTORY BEGINS TODAY WITH PRES. SARKIS ASSUMING HIS TASK. CONSTITUTIONAL OATH SESSION TO BE HELD TODAY IN CHTAURA. TRANSITION OF POSER TO SARKIS INSURES SURVIVAL OF LEBANESE UNITY. JUMBLATT ATTACKS PRES. SARKIS AND BOYCOTTS SESSION." MEDIA REPORTED THAT DEPUTIES WILL DEPART FOR CHTAURA FROM RESIDENCE OF KAMAL ASAAD VIA UYUN AL-SIMAN ROAD ESCORTED BY LEBANESE ARMY FORCES. OTHER FORCES WILL FACILITATE PASSAGE OF SOME DEPUTIES VIA SOFAR. "OBSERVERS ANTICIPATE QUORUM DESPITE BOYCOTT BY JUMBLATT AND HIS

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PARTISANS IN ATTEMPT TO PARALYZE OATH SESSION AND OBSTRUCT

SARKIS FROM ASSUMING POWER." AL-THAWRAH CITED BEIRUT RADIO REPORT THAT TRANSFER OF POWERS CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT FRANGIE'S RESIDENCE IN KUFUR IN PRESENCE OF PAST LEBANESE PRESIDENTS.

2. MEDIA NOTED FLURRY OF LAST-MINUTE MEETINGS TO PAVE WAY FOR SARKIS TAKEOVER. FRANGIE MET WITH SARKIS SEPT. 21 TO DISCUSS TRANSITION. IN DAMASCUS, PRES. ASAD RECEIVED PRIMIN KARAME SAME DAY TO REVIEW SITUATION AND EXCHANGE VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS AIMED AT RESOLVING CRISIS. FONMIN KHADDAM ALSO MET WITH SAEB SALAM. DR. KHOLI VISITED SARKIS SEPT. 22 TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR OATH SESSION AFTER AL MEDIATOR HELD TALKS WITH PIERRE GEMAYEL AND GHASSAN TWEINI. PRESS NOTED THAT MUFTI HASAN KHALID DECLARED AT PRESS CONFERENCE HIS REJECTION OF PARTITION AND HIS HOPES FOR SAFEGUARDING LEBANESE UNITY AND PALESTINIANS.

3. SEPT. 23 DAMASCUS RADIO BROADCAST TEXT OF STATEMENT BY LEBANESE ARMY VANGUARDS ANNOUNCING THEIR SUPPORT FOR NEW LEBANESE PRES. AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PLACE THEMSELVES AT HIS DISPOSAL TO REPEL PARTITION ATTEMPTS, END DESTRUCTION OF COUNTRY AND ENABLE HIM TO IMPLEMENT LONG-SOUGHT NATIONAL REFORMS. STATEMENT PRAISED COOPERATION SHOWN BY SYRIAN ARMED FORCES WITH VANGUARDS.

4. MEDIA REPORTED CONTINUATION BY COS SHIHABI AND AF COMMANDER JAMIL OF THEIR INSPECTION OF SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON SEPT. 21.

5. PRESS PUBLISHED SANA REPORT OF INTERVIEWS WITH BEKAA RESIDENTS WHO PRAISED SYRIAN EFFORTS TO SECURE RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE IN BEKAA AND PRESERVE LEBANON'S UNITY.

6. COLUMNISTS CALLED FOR ALL PARTIES IN LEBANON TO FACILITATE TASK OF PRES. SARKIS. AL-THAWRAH COLUMNIST SUGGESTED THAT, "SINCE ALL PARTIES TO LEBANESE CRISIS HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS TOWARD NEW PRES. AND THEIR READINESS TO FACILITATE HIS TASKS, THEY SHOULD NOW TRANSLATE THEIR INTENTIONS INTO DEEDS." AL-BAATH EDITORIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPEALED FOR "CEASEFIRE ON ALL TRADITIONAL FRONTS AND COVERING OF GUN BARRELS WITH ROSES OF LOVE." AL-BAATH COLUMNIST STRESSED SARKIS' CONCERN TO PRESERVE LEBANON'S UNITY AND TO REGULATE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE ON LEBANESE TERRITORY. AL-THAWRAH WRITER ASSERTED THAT, "WE DO NOT EXPECT SARKIS TO PERFORM MIRACLES OR TRANSFORM LEBANON OVERNIGHT INTO PEACEFUL COUNTRY." TISHRIIN COLUMNIST SLASHED AT "JUMBLATT'S DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE CRISIS

BY ACCUSING SARKIS OF ALIGNING HIMSELF WITH ISOLATIONISTS, THUS ATTEMPTING TO CLASSIFY HIM AS PARTY TO CRISIS AND UNDERMINING HIS HIS ABILITY TO ASSUME DUTIES AS ARBITRATOR AMONG DISPUTING FACTIONS SEEKING COMMON DENOMINATORS AS BASIS FOR ROUND-TABLE DIALOGUE TO SETTLE PROBLEMS."

7. COMMENT: MEDIA HAS STRIVEN TO PROMOTE IMPRESSION THAT DAMASCUS DOING ALL IN ITS POWER TO PROVIDE SARKIS WITH ASSETS THAT WILL GIVE HIM ADMINISTRATION SOME INITIAL IMPETUS TO PUT SETTLEMENT EFFORTS ON TRACK, WHILE PORTRAYING JUMBLATT AS SEEKING TO UNDERCUT SARKIS BUWESIDENCY FROM BE7,,8,&. INTERVIEWS WITH BEKAA RESIDENTS REMIND ALL OF TANGIBLE SECURITY GAINS MADE IN AREAS CONTROLLED BY SARG FORCES. SHIHABI-JAMIL INSPECTION TOUR WARNS SYRIA'S OPPONENTS THAT DAMASCUS MAINTAINS CAPABILITY FOR MILITARY SOLUTION TO CRISIS IF POLITICAL EFFORTS LEAD NOWHERE. AND ANNOUNCEMENT BY VANGUARDS OF FEALTY TO SARKIS MARKS ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE PRES. WITH SECURITY FORCE OF HIS OWN FOR USE AS FOUNDATION ON WHICH HE CAN PROCEED TO RECONSTRUCT VIABLE LEBANESE NATIONAL ARMY. MURPHY

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